

**NOW SPECIALLY DESIGNED FOR WOMEN—
THE WORLD'S MOST
POPULAR PHYSICAL FITNESS PROGRAM**

**BY THE AUTHOR OF
THE AEROBICS PROGRAM FOR
TOTAL WELL-BEING**



aerobics **R WOMEN**

aerobics **FOR WOMEN**

Mildred Cooper
and
Kenneth H. Cooper, M.D.



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AEROBICS FOR WOMEN

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**A fitness plan for every woman who wants to look better,
feel better and live her life more fully!**

Based on the proven results, research and ongoing studies of the basic AEROBICS program, here is the first Aerobics book written especially for women! It will: tell you why today's women have a particular need for Aerobics exercise; explain the medical, physical, emotional and cosmetic benefits of the popular program; make specific suggestions for exercise during menstruation, pregnancy, menopause and other conditions; report on the personal Aerobics experiences of women across the country; offer a special chart-pack of exercise programs geared specifically to women of all ages and a brand-new point evaluation system for activities that most women engage in every day, as well as special ~~high-priority~~ ~~new~~ and beauty exercises.

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AEROBICS

AEROBICS FOR WOMEN

by Mildred Cooper and Kenneth H. Cooper, M.D.

THE AEROBICS WAY

THE NEW AEROBICS

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*To women everywhere who have cared
enough about their own physical well-being
to undertake an aerobics program.*

Dr. Cooper Regrets . . . and Rectifies

AFTER I WROTE my first book, *Aerobics*, and before my second, *The New Aerobics*, was published, I received a letter from Marie R. Gill of Potsdam, New York, from which I humbly quote:

I write this in an utter snit. I'm reading your book, Aerobics, and am convinced the program will mean a lot to me. I can hardly wait to start.

But—at one point you say there are only two types of people, men and women, and that body differences, musculature, et cetera, are no excuse to earn less than 30 points.

All right, you acknowledge us as part of the human race. Where do you deal with our problem? I find a short section, most uncomplimentarily tacked on the end of a chapter on special groups including such "odd cases" as Over 50 and The Fat Boys' Club. No wonder we are in such bad shape.

How can we consider ourselves important when we're relegated to obscurity? You have no program for females—just a passing suggestion that we might aim for a 9-minute mile. Phooey!

I have to admit that Mrs. Gill was by no means the only member of the fair sex to accuse me of unfair treatment. Well, I plead guilty with extenuating circumstances.

My first book was really designed for young Air Force men. But the response from outside the military was so enthusiastic, particularly from people past 35, 40 or 45 years of age, that we saw immediately we had to make some changes.

In the second book, age-adjusted scales were included for all the specific exercise programs, along with a lengthy chapter addressed exclusively to women's fitness needs, attitudes and capabilities.

And still the response from women was so strong in terms of eagerness, questions and correspondence about special problems that a book devoted—in fact, restricted—to their use was no longer merely an appropriate sequel to the first two; it was mandatory.

When *Aerobics for Women* became inevitable, the most natural thing in the world for me to do was to ask my wife Millie to collaborate with me in writing it. As I said in the dedication lines in *The New Aerobics*, Millie has been my tireless co-worker, my unwavering supporter—and she is a beautiful example of the benefits of consistent exercise. Besides the fact that she lectures regularly and authoritatively on aerobics to groups throughout the country, she has something that I cannot begin to approach with all my scientific investigations: a woman's understanding of women.

So, together we've prepared this new book based on continuing aerobics research, current fitness studies on women, case histories and a wealth of personal experience in talking and corresponding with American womanhood.

Thank you for your patience—and bless all of you who cared enough to complain.

KENNETH H. COOPER, M.D.

Dallas, Texas

What about Liberating Your *Body*?

LONG BEFORE KEN or I had the remotest idea that I was going to be Mrs. Cooper, a mutual friend asked him, "Would you like a date with Millie?"

"Not in a million years!" he said. "That girl never stops talking—she just yaks all the time."

How we got from there to here is another story. But one thing I've learned (apart from the value of listening): I can talk about aerobics till I'm blue in the face and it doesn't do a bit of good until *you* can say, "I *know*." You have to taste it and experience it yourself to know the exhilaration that comes from being in good physical condition.

Beauty is *not* skin-deep. There's a radiance and a glow in every woman who's active—in the way she carries herself, in the way she looks, feels and lives. A lot of women exist till 90, but they never *live* past 20.

In these pages, I'll be urging you—relentlessly—to live.

MILLIE COOPER

Dallas, Texas

1: One Woman's Liberation— From Fat, Fatigue and Apathy

I SIT HERE now, thinking about what aerobics has done for me in terms of my figure (dress size down to size 8 from size 12), my weight (down 10 to 12 pounds), my energy and sense of well-being, the luxury of eating what I please without worrying about calories and my freedom from tension and insomnia, and I feel rather smug.

But I also have to wonder how Ken must have felt 10 years ago when he was studying exercise physiology—knowing he intended to devote his life to this field, and knowing too that his wife couldn't care less about it. If he couldn't convince *me* of the health benefits and sheer pleasure that come from having a fit, conditioned body, how could he convince anyone else?

You may think you're indifferent to the subject of exercise, but you couldn't find anyone more tuned out than I was when Ken and I were married in 1959.

We're both natives of the Sooner State (we grew up 20 miles apart without crossing paths) and we also met in Oklahoma at the Fort Sill Army Base in Lawton. Ken had just finished his internship and was fulfilling his military obligation as a flight surgeon and I, fresh from the University of Oklahoma with a degree in sociology, had a job there as a recreation director with special services.

I come from a family that suffers from a disease common to 50,000,000 Americans: obesity. (Incredible as it seems, 25 percent of this country's population is at least 15 pounds overweight.) My sister used to tip the scales at over 200 and my grandmother died weighing close to 300 pounds. I never had a weight problem while I was growing up because I was active—I played girls' basketball and in college I took the required physical-education courses—but like many others

my family certainly didn't encourage regular exercise as a way of life.

On the other hand, Ken's family had always been exercise-conscious. His father is a dentist who instilled in him a deep appreciation of the value of preventive medicine, and his mother encouraged him in athletics. During his high school years he was Oklahoma state champion in the mile (time, 4:31) and when I met him at Fort Sill, running and jogging were as much a part of his daily routine as brushing his teeth. I viewed his concern with fitness as a mild eccentricity (but it certainly wasn't a deterrent when he proposed).

In those days before joggers had become a familiar sight, people who saw you running in a public area thought you were being chased or going to a fire. I was always being asked, "Is your husband that nut who runs all the time?"

Truthfully, exercise to me was strictly for athletes and body-builders. I couldn't imagine anyone making a career of it. I used to wish Ken would go into pediatrics so I could say he was a baby doctor—everyone knows and respects *that* field.

Instead, he switched from the Army to the Air Force because of his interest in the aerospace program and eventually we were transferred to Boston so he could work on his master's in public health and doctorate in exercise physiology at Harvard.

If I nurtured any illusions about life in a big, conservative New England city influencing my husband against running in public, they were short-lived. I soon learned that I was up against the Boston Marathon. His determination to compete in this 26-mile foot race, staged every April for amateur runners, made him even more avid about his daily exercise. To train for it, he ran every day in every kind of weather, including -10° temperatures that actually froze his nostrils. Naturally, he'd wear his most beat-up old clothes, and most days he'd pass the same two newspaper boys doing their route. Once he heard one remark to the other, "Hey, look, here it comes again."

That pretty much expressed the way I felt when I'd see

him. After running 10 miles, he'd ride his bicycle 8 miles to Harvard. I'd drive our car to work and turn my head when I passed him. I found the whole thing acutely embarrassing. (When the Boston Marathon was run, he placed 101 among 400 competitors.)

You might well wonder what earthshaking event converted me from such negativism about exercise. It was the swift and steady beating of my own heart.

After Ken finished his course work at Harvard we were stationed at Brooks Air Force Base in San Antonio, where he began to specialize in research relating to the particular exercise needs of the astronauts. I still wasn't exercising regularly, although I'd occasionally go bike riding with Ken. Our daughter Berkley was born and then I was totally housebound for the first time. I had that after-pregnancy dumpiness and dragginess. One night Ken and I were relaxing after dinner, watching television, and he said, "Take my resting heart rate."

So I checked his pulse—and got about 50 beats a minute. Then he counted mine and got 80 beats.

"Thirty beats' difference isn't so much," I said blithely.

"Oh, no? Think of it this way," said my cagey husband. "While we're asleep tonight, your heart is going to beat about ten thousand times more than mine will. Even though our hearts are pumping the same *amount* of blood, it takes your heart that much more work and effort to do the job because you're not in condition. You're just going to wear out faster than I will."

Do I need to elaborate on what went through my head, including visions of Ken, a widower, courting the woman who would become the second Mrs. Cooper—and Berkley's stepmother?

The combination of these dire thoughts with the fact that deep down inside I secretly admitted that Ken was right about the need for daily exercise and the benefits of it, finally persuaded me that I couldn't afford *not* to get into an aerobics conditioning program.

The next day I put Berkley in her stroller, hitched our

dog on her leash and started pushing and pulling all of us over a mile-and-a-half course that Ken measured out for me around our neighborhood in San Antonio.

An exercise program *has* to be individual if it's to be successful. Fortunately, aerobics offers plenty of options: you can walk, jog, run, skip rope, climb stairs, swim, bicycle—do any number of activities or sports that stimulate your heart and lungs over a prolonged period of time. Several of the options weren't feasible for me because of Berkley or because they just didn't appeal. (I don't enjoy water sports. As a result, Ken and I have never shared one of his favorite recreations, water skiing, and I have an almost worshipful admiration for any woman who earns her aerobic points by swimming.)

I decided to make running "my thing" because it was handiest and I could take Berkley with me. At that time it was convenient for me to run in the late afternoon and that was when I seemed to need it most. I got through the day fine, but about four o'clock I'd find myself getting headachy, irritable and lethargic from being cooped up in the house.

The first few weeks were the very hardest because I was just starting and knew I couldn't expect results right away. It was like a diet, I'd think, "I just can't do this." But somehow each day I'd manage to put on my track shoes and get me, my child and my dog on the road again. First I'd walk, and then I got to the point where on downhill sections I'd start jogging—it must have been quite a spectacle, me pushing Berkley in her stroller with her red hair standing up on end, and a fat blond cocker lumbering along behind.

On Sundays, Ken and I would run together. He'd put Berkley in the stroller and let me get to the top of the hill in front of our house and then they'd start out behind me. Little Berkley would yell "Faster, faster, Daddy," and I'd hear them gaining on me even though I had a half-mile start. I felt insulted that they could catch me, so I started trying harder on my daily workouts during the week. In time, the effort paid off in far more than being able to outdistance my husband and daughter.

I became two sizes smaller. I've always been heavy

through the hips and I took off 4" in that area alone. My dress size went from 12 to 8.

I weighed less. You don't lose a lot of weight rapidly from exercising, but you do convert fat to lean muscle and you lose inches. This, combined with the fact that the exercise curbed my indulgent appetite, resulted in a weight loss of over 10 pounds. Of course, a reduced-calorie diet *with* exercise is marvelous; you burn up 100 percent fat. (If you fast without exercise, you burn about 50 percent fat and 50 percent muscle mass.)

My eating habits were automatically controlled. Although you may not lose weight on an exercise program by itself, you definitely won't gain. I love to eat, and what a pleasure to enjoy a dessert or between-meal snack and know I wasn't going to pay for it in pounds because I was burning them up!

At the same time, I found my desire for rich goodies was not as keen. When I came back from exercising, the thought of a piece of cream pie was nauseating, but sucking on a fresh orange was just great. Also, people who exercise regularly crave more fluids, and drinking a lot of fluid is a good way to control appetite.

I was less tense, more energetic and slept better. Exercise banished my end-of-the-day blahs. I built up a second wind and felt less tired in general. And I had no residual tension to keep me awake when I went to bed.

My resting heart rate decreased from 82 to 57 beats per minute. My entire heart/lungs/blood-vessel system became more efficient. This was evident not just from my lower heart rate; I actually breathed easier. Lungs are like balloons and most of us breathe out of the top half only. Getting air down into the lower half isn't easy at the beginning—it's like trying to inflate a new balloon for the first time. But after you're conditioned, you feel a real difference in the ease of air flow in and out.

My self-image was definitely enhanced. Even if you couldn't document everything that happens to a person physiologically as a result of aerobics, which you can, the psychological benefits are worth everything. I know I don't lose a pound or an inch every time I run, but I know how

good I feel when I do something to improve myself and my figure. In one area of my life, at least, I have discipline. No matter what else happens during the day, I can say to myself, "Well, I got my exercise in."

I was aware of my husband's pride in me. Before I started exercising, I'd watch a woman come up to Ken and say, "Dr. Cooper, I'm running a mile in such-and-such a time." The admiration that would come into his eyes really made me jealous. Now I can hear the pride in his voice when he tells other people what *I've* accomplished in my aerobics program.

As I said before, exercise is individual, as individual as the makeup you choose for yourself. It's got to fit your needs, your desires, what you're best at—walking, swimming, cycling, whatever.

Once you get into it, you're hooked: the smaller dress sizes, the good feeling about your body, your husband's pride, even the way other people envy your self-discipline.

Eventually, when Berkley started nursery school, I switched my exercise program to mornings so I could do it while she was being taken care of. Even then, after some conditioning, I never dreamed I'd ever be able to run a mile nonstop. It wasn't even my goal. I'd start off jogging, then walk a while, then jog a while. And every day I'd jog to the same point before I got tired.

One day I was jogging along, planning what to have for dinner, and when I looked up I'd *passed* the point where I always stopped before—yet I was still running and I was not fatigued.

Now this is the aerobic training effect. One day it's just there. What you couldn't accomplish the day before suddenly becomes a snap.

So every day I set *little* goals for myself—getting beyond a certain house, and so on. And every day I *inched* my way to running a mile nonstop, and it was the greatest feeling in the world to know I could do it. It's a fact that most people—men included—can't run a mile. If you happen to mention that you *can*, people look at you and marvel. Being able to excel at something unusual does wonders for your self-esteem.